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WAR POEMS  
*from The Yale Review.*

REPRINTS FROM THE  
YALE REVIEW



*A Book of Yale Review Verse,*  
1917

*War Poems from The Yale Review,*  
1918

*War Poems from The Yale Review*  
*(Second Edition),*  
1919

*Four Americans,*  
*by Henry A. Beers,*  
1919



WAR POEMS  
*from The Yale Review*

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
THE EDITORS



*Second Edition.*

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## FOREWORD



**T**HOUGH it is still too early to say what goal of permanent art the verse inspired by the Great War will eventually reach, it is already possible to see the direction in which it is moving. Certain distinctive and dynamic values have unmistakably appeared—values which set the characteristic war poetry of our day in marked contrast with that of the past, and with what we know of the curiously archaic expression of modern Germany. Our own product, which this little collection from the work of a score of British and American writers may illustrate, is almost strangely free from the mood of the older war minstrels. Our poets to-day are seldom intrigued by the pomp and circumstance of armies. They indulge in very little glorification of the sheer joy of combat, the hot hatreds and bloody vengeance of battle. The war is seen by them rather as a new atonement than as a mighty drama of arms; and its heroes for them are the men, the women, the children, who have suffered to the uttermost for the redemption of the world. The overwhelming grief; the superhuman endurance; the poignant and triumphant dignity of death; the terrible losses, the spiritual reparations—these are the themes that our war poets have made peculiarly their own. It is as if they were con-

strained by that warning uttered out of the fulness of the wisdom of peace—

The tumult and the shouting dies;  
The captains and the kings depart:  
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart.

But for all the tragedy and pathos, there is no weak lament, no vain longing for the peace that is gone. Never in history have war poets been so preoccupied with the greatness of their cause. The beauty of the ideal towards which humanity to-day is struggling through blood, touches and consecrates their art.

THE EDITORS.

*August, 1918.*

## NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE first edition of "War Poems from *The Yale Review*" has been exhausted, but the demand has not come to an end with peace. The editors have taken advantage of a second printing of the book to make a few changes, and to add poems by Edgar Lee Masters, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, John Gould Fletcher, and others, that substantially increase the completeness and effectiveness of the anthology.

THE EDITORS.

*August, 1919.*

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# WAR POEMS

*from The Yale Review.*



ALFRED NOYES



## THE UNION

**Y**OU that have gathered together the sons of all races,  
And welded them into one,  
Lifting the torch of your Freedom on hungering faces  
That sailed to the setting sun;

You that have made of mankind in your own proud  
regions  
The music of man to be,  
How should the old earth sing of you, now, as your legions  
Rise to set all men free?

How should the singer that knew the proud vision and  
loved it,  
In the days when not all men knew,  
Gaze, through his tears, on the light, now the world has  
approved it;  
Or dream, when the dream comes true?

How should he sing when the Spirit of Freedom in  
thunder

Speaks, and the wine-press is red;

And the sea-winds are loud with the chains that are broken  
asunder

And nations that rise from the dead?

Flag of the sky, proud flag of that wide communion,

Too mighty for thought to scan;

Flag of the many in one, and that last world-union

That kingdom of God in man;

Ours was a dream, in the night, of that last federation,

But yours is the glory unfurled,—

The marshalled nations and stars that shall make one  
nation

One singing star of the world.



## JOHN ERSKINE



### IMPRESSIONS AT THE FRONT

#### I

**I**S this the front—this level sweep of life,  
This pageant without pulse of haste or fear?  
Can this calm exercise be mortal strife?  
Is the last reach of passion measured here?  
We looked for angry blade and poisonous breath  
Striking the floor of judgment, flail and fan;  
Here lurked, we thought, crude agonies of death—  
But here, in one wide dignity, is man.

Others behind the conflict, safe and far,  
Still wage with lips their travesty of war;  
We catch the rumor when the cannon cease.  
Here at the front, when most the cannon rage,  
The dream-touched actors on this mighty stage  
In silence play their parts, and seem at peace.

#### II

Framed in with battle, this weird pantomime,  
This dignity of action, conjures up  
Shades of old heroes—Lancelot in his prime,  
Galahad, questing for the holy cup,  
Beautiful Hector marching to his fate,  
Tristram and Palimedes, rivals twain,

And Roland sounding his proud horn too late—  
These quiet actors play these parts again.

And in the lull the critics far away,  
Who have not seen, nor ever read, this play,  
Who cannot act, who never trod the stage—  
Their quarrel mingle with the threatening cry  
Of the scene-shifters watching Roland die,  
Who seize the moment for a better wage.

### III

If this world be a stage, what hours we give  
To tedious make-up in the tiring room;  
How simply comes at last our cue to live,  
How, ere we know it, we enact our doom!  
The wisdom that impels us to the play  
Is patient with us while we choose our parts,  
But without warning sounds our judgment day;  
The curtain rises—life, the drama, starts.

How late it starts! Ere this grim curtain rose,  
How long we practised attitude and pose,  
Disguise of accent, costume, mood, or mind!  
Yet in this inventory of our art,  
Living at last, we play our naked heart;  
How brief a reckoning counts us with our kind!

### IV

If character be fate, no need to ask  
Who set the stage, who cast you for the rôle;

Put on what man you are, put off the mask,  
Put on the tragic pattern of your soul.  
At last be true; no gesture now let spring  
But from supreme sincerity of art;  
Let him who plays the monarch be a king,  
Who plays the rogue, be perfect in his part.

So when this hour had rung, the scene began.  
One played the rash, one played the patient man,  
And one, the hero, drew the dragon's fangs;  
One heard death's bugler calling, and obeyed;  
And one, a rose-cheeked boy, the martyr played;  
One played the traitor well—see where he hangs.

## V

We may yet play more rôles than we believed,  
Since to himself at last each man is known,  
Since now the actor studies undeceived  
The part he learned, and lived, and has outgrown.  
And those, the few and flawless, the sublime  
Whose poignance of perfection strikes us dumb—  
Even for themselves, in the surprise of the time,  
Doubt not another reckoning will come.

“Comrades, we shall rehearse more wisely—yea,  
There shall be nobler persons in our play,  
We shall rebuild the plot on kindlier laws.”  
So at the front they act, and see, and ponder,  
And win, with simple gratitude and wonder,  
Peace in themselves, which is their sole applause.

## ROBERT FROST



### NOT TO KEEP

THEY sent him back to her. The letter came  
Saying . . . and she could have him. And before  
She could be sure there was no hidden ill  
Under the formal writing, he was in her sight—  
Living.—They gave him back to her alive—  
How else? They are not known to send the dead—  
And not disfigured visibly. His face?—  
His hands? She had to look—to ask  
“What was it, dear?” And she had given all  
And still she had all—*they* had—they the lucky!  
Wasn't she glad now? Everything seemed won,  
And all the rest for them permissible ease.  
She had to ask “What was it, dear?”

“Enough,  
Yet not enough. A bullet through and through,  
High in the breast. Nothing but what good care  
And medicine and rest—and you a week,  
Can cure me of to go again.” The same  
Grim giving to do over for them both.  
She dared no more than ask him with her eyes  
How was it with him for a second trial.  
And with his eyes he asked her not to ask.  
They had given him back to her, but not to keep.

JOHN FINLEY



## THE VALLEYS OF THE BLUE SHROUDS

(Where the valiant *poilus* were buried in their blue uniforms.)

O SHARDS of walls that once held precious life,  
Now scattered, like the bones the Prophet saw  
Lying in visioned valley of the slain  
Ere One cried: "Son of Man, can these bones live?"

O images of heroes, saints, and Christs,  
Pierced, broken, thrust in hurried sepulture  
In selfsame tombs with tinsel, dross, and dreg,  
And without time for either shrift or shroud!

O smould'ring embers of Love's hearthstone fires,  
Quenched by the fiercer fires of hellish hate,  
That have not where to kindle flames again  
To light succeeding generations on!

O ghost-gray ashes of cathedral towers  
That toward the sky once raised appealing hands  
To beg the God of all take residence within  
And hold communion with the kneeling souls!

O silent tongues of bells that once did ring  
Matin and Angelus o'er peaceful fields,

Now shapeless slag that will to-morrow serve  
To make new engines for still others' woe!

O dust that flowered in finial and foil  
And bright in many-petaled windows bloomed,  
Now unto dust returned at cannon's breath  
To lay thy faded glories on the crypt!

The cirrus dawns in Parsee tapestries  
With azure broiderings will clothe your walls;  
The nimbus noons will shower golden rain  
And sunset colors fill each Gothic arch;

For o'er thy stricken vales, O valiant France,  
Our love for thee shall prophesy anew,  
And Heav'n's Four Winds of Liberty, allied,  
Shall breathe unpoisoned in thy streets till they  
Shall pulse again with life that laughs and sings,  
And yet remembers, singing through its tears  
The music of an everlasting song—  
Remembers, proudly and undyingly,  
*The hero dust that lies in shrouds of blue*  
*But rises as thy soul, immortal France!*

JOHN MASEFIELD



THE WILL TO PERFECTION

O WRETCHED man, that, for a little mile  
Crawls beneath Heaven for his brother's blood,  
Whose days the planets number with their style,  
To whom all earth is slave, all living, food;

O withering man, within whose folded shell  
Lies yet the seed, the spirit's quickening corn,  
That Time and Sun will change out of the cell  
Into green meadows, in the world unborn;

If Beauty be a dream, do but resolve  
And fire shall come, that in the stubborn clay  
Works to make perfect till the rocks dissolve,  
The barriers burst and beauty takes her way,

Beauty herself, within whose blossoming Spring  
Even wretched man shall clap his hands and sing.

EMILE CAMMAERTS



MEDITATION SUR LA NUIT DU TROIS AOÛT

(1914-1917)

(Translation by Madame Cammaerts.)

- Que faites-vous assis, la tête dans votre manteau?
- Que faites-vous accroupis, le menton dans la main?
- Que faites-vous couchés, les yeux levés vers le ciel?
- Nous attendons que le soleil se lève sur les eaux.
- Et qu'à la veille succède le lendemain.
- Nous attendons que les morts se réveillent.

Les soldats montent la garde autour du tombeau.  
Ils ont roulé la pierre, ils ont posé les sceaux.  
Dans la nuit étoilée brillent leurs baïonettes  
Et ils portent des casques à pointe sur la tête.  
Ils parlent une langue que nous n'entendons pas,  
Une langue précise et lourde comme leurs pas.  
Même au seuil du tombeau, ils ne baissent pas la voix.  
Et ils trébuchent en jurant sur les croix. . . .

Que manque-t-il, mon pays, à ta Passion?  
N'as-tu pas eu ton agonie dans le Jardin?  
N'as-tu pas dû subir les caresses de Judas,  
En cette nuit d'août où la trahison



Te baisait la joue en te tordant la main ?  
N'as-tu pas dû, comme Jésus, faire ton choix ?

Que manque-t-il, mon pays, à ton Calvaire ?  
N'es-tu pas tombé trois fois sous la croix,  
A Liège, à Namur, à Anvers ?  
T'ont-ils épargné leurs injures, leurs crachats,  
Leurs railleries et leurs coups ?  
N'as-tu pas saigné sous la couronne d'épines ?  
N'as-tu pas senti s'enfoncer les clous :  
Dinant, Termonde, Andenne, Tamines ?  
N'as-tu pas demandé à boire  
Et goûte le fiel de l'éponge dérisoire  
Tandis que tes bourreaux, à tes pieds,  
Se disputaient ta robe à coups de dés ?  
N'as-tu pas eu faim et soif de Justice ?  
N'as-tu pas mangé le pain de la captivité ?  
N'as-tu pas bu jusqu'à la lie le calice  
De l'esclavage et de l'iniquité ?

Pourtant la terre n'a pas célébré ton deuil,  
Les cieux ne se sont pas obscurcis,  
Tu n'as pas eu de mains amies  
Pour te coucher dans ton cercueil.  
Voilà non trois jours mais trois ans que tu tombas,  
Comme un fruit trop mûr, dans ton tombeau.  
Trois ans qu'ils ont roulé la pierre et posé les sceaux  
Et les morts ne se réveillent toujours pas. . . .

—Que faites-vous assis, la tête dans votre manteau ?  
—Que faites-vous couchés, les yeux levés vers le ciel ?

- Que faites-vous accroupis, le menton dans la main?  
—Nous entendons les moissonneurs qui aiguisent leurs faux.  
—Nous humons les parfums des prairies maternelles.  
—Nous regardons pâlir l'étoile du matin.
- 

- What are you doing seated there, with your head wrapped in your cloak?  
—What are you doing crouched there, with your chin upon your hand?  
—What are you doing lying there, with your eyes fixed on the sky?  
—We are waiting for the sun to rise upon the waters.  
—And for the morn to follow on the night.  
—We are waiting for the dead to awake. . . .

The soldiers are watching around the tomb,  
They have rolled the stone in place, they have set the seals.

In the starry night their bayonets gleam,  
They are wearing pointed helmets on their heads.  
They speak a speech we do not understand,  
A language harsh and heavy as their steps.  
By the very grave, they lower not their voices,  
And they stumble on the crosses and they curse.

What is lacking, O my Country, to thy Passion?  
Hast thou not had thine agony in the Garden?  
Wast thou not forced to take Judas kisses,

That night in August when treason  
Kissed thy cheek and wrung thy hand?  
Didst thou not, like Jesus, have to make thy choice?

What is lacking, O my Country, to thy Calvary?  
Didst thou not fall three times beneath the cross—  
At Liège, at Namur, and at Antwerp?  
Wert thou spared their spitting and their insults,  
Their mockeries and their blows?  
Didst thou not bleed beneath a crown of thorns?  
Didst thou not feel the nails pierce thy flesh—  
Dinant, Termonde, Andenne, Tamines?  
Didst thou not ask to drink, and taste  
The gall on mocking sponge,  
While underneath thee, at thy feet,  
The soldiers cast upon thy vestures lots?  
Didst thou not for Justice thirst and hunger?  
Didst thou not eat the captive's bitter bread?  
Didst thou not drink unto the very dregs  
The cruel cup of shame and slavery?

And yet the earth did not join in thy mourning,  
The heavens were not overcast and black,  
No loving hands were near to lay thee  
Tenderly in thy tomb.

And now, not three days but three years have passed  
Since thou fellst, like too ripe fruit, into thy grave,  
Since they rolled the stone in place and set the seals,  
And still the dead have not arisen. . . .

- What are you doing seated there, with your head wrapped in your cloak?
- What are you doing lying there, with your eyes fixed on the sky?
- What are you doing crouched there, with your chin upon your hand?
- We are listening to the reapers sharpening their scythes.
- We are breathing in the perfume of our country's fields.
- We are watching the paling of the morning star.

KATHARINE LEE BATES



THE NEW ILIAD

SO young, with bright tossed hair and eager eyes,  
The curves and tints of boyhood on a face  
More fit for mother-kiss than powder-stain,  
Wearing his khaki like a brief disguise  
Donned by a student, on our dusty train  
He sat for hours unmoving in his place.

That slender presence, sacrificial, fair,  
Drew many glances, though, New England bred,  
One word of all our love we could not speak.  
We only watched him as he nestled there  
Against the window, with the page of Greek  
Open beneath his hand, unturned, unread.

His blue eyes conned a mightier Iliad.  
Those beehive wars of one wife-stealing clan  
Against another on a windy spur  
Of Asia Minor faded from the lad  
Fronting that most tremendous massacre  
E'er staged by Time, well-skilled tragedian.

Where ravening, savage Might, the Antichrist,  
Gigantic onset makes against the line  
That holds for Freedom, Honor, Pity, all

Those slow-won sanctities whose worth is priced  
Above the utmost cost of blood. Appal  
Though such cost may, we yield not our Divine.

But what new Homer, in what land awaking,  
Shall chant this war, its crashing battle-waves,  
Its flying duels mirrored from above  
Within the rainbow, fatal thunders breaking  
In ocean's purple depth, the borders of  
Wide countries wrought in armies and in graves?

Down thirty centuries Helen's face has shone  
By magic of a blind old bard. Thy soul,  
Edith Cavell, shall not its beauty find  
Remembrance? Is the fame by Hector won  
To lord it still, while dust upon the wind  
Are the brave deeds that crowd our daily scroll?

With bright tossed hair and eager eyes, the lad,  
Still as a statue of immortal youth,  
Leaned to his window, heedless of the Greek,  
Already in that greater Iliad  
Striking his blow. The love we could not speak  
Encompassed him in looks of pride and ruth.

## JOHN GOULD FLETCHER



### A NEW HEAVEN

WE have our hopes and fears that flout us,  
We have our illusions, changeless through the  
years;

We have our dreams of rest after long struggle,  
After our toil is finished, folded hands.  
But for those who have fallen in battle,  
What Heaven can there be?

Heaven is full of those who can remember  
The ebbing-out of life that slowly lingered  
At the dark doors of pain;  
Heaven is full of those who dropped their burden  
At last through weariness;  
But these the War has taken  
Remember naught but their own exultant youth  
Filling their hearts with unaccomplished dreams:  
The trumpet-call—then the swift searing darkness  
Stilling the proud sad song.

How will these enter in  
Our old dull Heaven?  
Where we seek only to drowse at ease, unthinking,  
Since we are safe at last.

Safe? For these souls who faced a thousand dangers,  
And found sly Death that robbed them of their chance,  
Ere it befell?

Safe—can a Heaven which is safe and painless,  
Ever be Heaven to them?

Somewhere amid the clouds there is the home of thunder;  
Thunder is naught to them,  
It is a ball, a heavy plaything  
They may kick hither and thither with their feet.  
Lightning is but a toy—the flaming stars  
Are endless camp-fire lights;  
And for the silence of eternity,  
They too on out-post duty, often heard it speak.

We have the dreams of our fat lives that lead us  
To waste our lives;  
We have the false hope we are serving others  
When it is but ourselves we serve;  
Yet for these who have never lived, and whose sole service  
Was but to die too soon,  
Perhaps somewhere they are making a new Heaven  
Filled with the divine despair and joy this dead earth  
never knew.



KARLE WILSON BAKER



EAGLE YOUTH

(1918)

THEY have taken his horse and plume,  
They have left him to plod, and fume  
For a hero's scope and room!  
They have curbed his fighting pride,  
They have bade him burrow and hide  
With a million, side by side:  
Look—into the air he springs,  
Fighting with wings!

He has found a way to be free  
Of that dun immensity  
That would swallow up such as he:  
Who would burrow when he could fly?  
He will climb up into the sky  
And the world shall watch him die!  
Only his peers may dare  
Follow him there!

LOUIS UNTERMEYER



JERUSALEM DELIVERED

I BOUGHT my paper at the crowded corner  
And almost shouted as I read the news:  
*"Jerusalem Taken—Freedom For The Jews."*  
Here was a line to answer friend and scorner,  
A triumph for the just, a proof that Time,  
So negligent of the affairs of men,  
Had turned and given us our own at last.  
And then  
He stumbled past—  
A cross between a monarch and a mourner,  
Dark-eyed and dismal, but with a sublime  
Assurance in his face.  
A pride of race  
Endowed him with an insolent sort of grace,  
Something at once rebellious and resigned;  
A dignity that shamed the yoke,  
A warmth that called and clasped me to my kind.  
And then he spoke:  
"What should we want with Zion now, we Jews  
With iron in our souls, with brain and thews  
Hardened by hammering epochs; we who made  
Majestic dictates that have swayed  
And outlived conquering empires; we

In whom a fresh and fiery energy  
Has blossomed into psalms and saviors; turned  
A savage tribe to kings and priests that burned  
To set a whole world free.  
Dreamers that rose against the darkening hordes;  
Poets in armor; prophets bearing swords—  
We who have lived, triumphant in defeat,  
Spurring a lagging world, shall we now meet  
To find the softest path, the easiest road,  
And run, rejoicing, to a snug retreat?  
What trade have we with comfort well-bestowed  
Who are the world's uncomfortable goad?  
Sorrow has been our quickening bread, and pain  
The healing wine that made us strong again.  
A race of exiled shepherds without a fold,  
We sought new flocks and stopped to weep  
Over a hundred homes we could not keep,  
Gathering for others what they could not hold.

*By the waters of Babylon  
We sat down and wept;  
Upon the comfortless willows  
We hung our harps.  
A kingdom of priests and a holy nation,  
We were nourished on hate.  
Lifting our eyes to the hills  
We praised all goodness and drank  
Poison and prejudice,  
Bigotry and death. . . .  
So we went forth—*

*Outcast, defrauded, maligned—  
Sowing the world with faith;  
Kindling the earth with a dream.*

Kindling the earth with a dream, we spread our seed,  
Warriors and wise men rising from our bones.  
Summoning Maccabeus in our need,  
Judas the Hammer sprang up from the stones.  
We struck with him for nothing but a screed;  
Assembling all the scattered tones  
And fragments of the Law, we fought and freed  
The unborn Western world. We challenged Rome  
Upon the blood-soaked ruins of our home;  
And from Barkochba's smouldering defeat  
We gathered strength to stand against the flood  
Of lies and inquisitions, greed and blood,  
When chivalry became a pious cheat.  
We lived to think and suffer while the fires  
Of hate beat over us at every step;  
While the crusaders raged with bloody feet  
And Murder, to the tune of '*Hep! Hep! Hep!*'  
Danced at our doors or swaggered down the street.  
The night hears voices death could never kill  
In Trèves and Strasburg, Worms, Cologne, and Spires.  
Our ghosts still cry in York and in Seville;  
The walls of Kishinev are never still.  
There was but one escape for us at last—  
To turn to lusty legends like a blast  
Of heartening trumpets, wring new life from these,

Facing dark futures with our fiery past;  
Or heal ourselves in orient imageries.

*In Paradise*

*There are eighty myriads of trees.  
The meanest among them is taller  
Than the cedars of Lebanon  
And richer than clusters of camphire in the vineyards  
of En-gedi.*

*In every corner*

*There are sixty myriads of angels,  
Bright as the grains of a silver pomegranate  
Upon which fall the rays of the moon.  
The Tree of Life stands in the very centre  
And shades the whole of the heavens.  
It has fifteen thousand tastes  
And the perfumes thereof vary likewise.  
Over it hang seven clouds of glory;  
Wild beasts are friendly beneath it,  
And winds sing in its branches forever.  
And we shall inherit it.  
We shall dwell in the fifth of the heavens  
That is built of raw silver with a wainscot of gold.  
The canopies are all of stars  
And the coverlets of the jewelled beds  
Are purple and blue silks  
Woven by Eve herself.  
We shall lie softly there  
And see the sun come from his chamber like a bride-  
groom,*

*Or like a strong man about to run a race.  
We shall watch him rise in the morning,  
Fresh from his bath of flame,  
The brightness dripping from his hair,  
Scattering drops of daylight through the skies.  
We shall talk with Elijah.  
And every Monday and Thursday, on Sabbaths and  
holidays,  
The Patriarchs shall walk with us  
And the twelve sons of Jacob,  
And Moses and David and all the kings of Israel  
Shall pass with the Messiah.  
The gates of carbuncle shall lift their heads,  
The rocks shall clap their hands,  
Forgotten crannies of the earth be green pavilions  
And dusty crevices shall bloom with laughter!*

So we have flourished, fed on dreams and doubt,  
God-makers and god-breakers, lashing out  
With Job-like questioning at God and death  
And answering ourselves in that same breath.  
An angry blaze, a scornful thundering  
At all things, and a faith in everything.  
A fire that swept through Joshua and came  
To white perfection in Spinoza's flame;  
That lit Lassalle's and Heine's ironies  
And shone in quiet radiance from the lives  
Of Ibn Ezra to Maimonides.  
The light that, often dimmed, persists and strives

Through all of us from Mendelssohn to Marx;  
The brand of which they all were scattering sparks—  
Hillel and Jesus—even so are we.

A race that burns, an ever fiery sword  
To rescue tolerance and set freedom free—  
This is our mission, let us never cast  
Away our boldness which hath great reward. . . .

Into the world then, let us bear this light  
Not skulk back home with it, but swing the bright  
Brand into musty corners. Let the flame  
Beat on all smug deceit and placid shame;  
Turning our backs on softness, we shall go,  
Making fresh fires and stronger beacons burn  
There where the fight is darkest. Let us turn  
Like a new army risen from its dreams,  
To sterner measures, universal schemes  
Wherever something struggles, climbs, or delves.  
So let us rise above the past we know  
And be a light not only to ourselves.

*Out of unburied ages came a voice:  
'Listen, O isles, unto me  
And hearken, ye people, from afar.  
The Lord hath called me and said,  
Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I am glorified!  
Yet it is too small a thing that thou shouldst be my  
servant  
To raise up only the tribes of Jacob  
And to restore the preserved of Israel:*

*No—I will also give thee  
For a light to the Gentiles,  
As a beacon to all men,  
That my desire and thy mission reach  
Unto the ends and stretches of the world.' "*

He stopped.

The gray dusk dropped its thin disguise  
A moment only, and the crowd surged on.  
A newsboy shrieked the news again and hopped  
Between us as I sought the old man's eyes,  
So wise, benevolent, and wan;  
Less of a mystery than a shining clue.  
I turned to ask—something I think I knew  
But never can be sure of.  
He was gone.



IRENE McLEOD



THE ABSENT LOVER

SPRING is gone, and summer's here,  
They're bringing up the hay,  
Soon they will be harvesting,  
And my love's still away.  
I see the apples reddening,  
And yellow burns the wheat,  
Lovers sit in summer's heart,  
And sing to summer's beat.  
But my love's still away!

He lies there, he cries there,  
I hear him night and day;  
I cannot hear the birds sing,  
For my love's still away.  
I'll not go through the clover field,  
Along to Foxglove wood,  
Nor climb the ash on Chapel hill  
We climbed in happier mood.  
For my love's still away!

We hated never man nor beast,  
Our hearts were pure and gay,  
We worshipped love in gentleness,  
Yet they took my love away.

They sent my love a-butchering  
Other women's dears,  
And oh, the cries of women's hearts  
Ring tolling in my ears.

They took our loves away!

O summer lanes, O summer fields  
That smell so sweet of hay,  
When this is done, and Truth is won—  
Though my love's still away—  
May happier lovers love here  
Where I so lonely tread,  
And build thy shining city, Love,  
Over our darling dead. . . .

Though my love's still away!

## MISSING

**I** KNEW by their eyes when they came,  
Lips locked on a word unsaid,  
Hands gentle as pity, or death. . . .  
It was I who cried out on your name;  
Life paused on a breath. . . .  
Missing! Hope sprang like a flame!  
Not dead! O my love . . . not dead?

# GRACE HAZARD CONKLING



## TO FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

KILLED IN FRANCE, JULY 31, 1917.

"Shall I meet Keats in some wild isle of balm  
Dreaming beside a tarn?"

—*Francis Ledwidge.*

**L**OVER of the lane-rose, of rainy trees,  
And speech of corn and wind upon the hill,  
Voice of the deep fields, high priest of the bees  
When summer whispers all you say she will,  
Beside what crystal water poised and still  
Have you bewitched his dreams with news of these  
And of his nightingale, talking until  
The wild isle listens and the fairy seas?  
But if as far as this, dark rumor flies,  
And he should ask of England and of France,  
Graving the dear-bought wisdom of your eyes,  
Oh give him comfort! Tell him they still advance,  
Those grim and glorious men who mean to free  
Your Flanders grave, and his in Italy!

LEE WILSON DODD



PLUS TARD

AND later on, those who are left will say  
Little about it; they will not care to tell  
Much of those years—content to buy and sell,  
To practise law, relive in the old way  
The old quiet humdrum round. One will be gray,  
A trifle bent, a trifle frail, and—well,  
If someone asks him where his comrades fell  
In France, he may grow garrulous. . . . He may,  
Or he may not. It all depends. If he  
Is sitting at dusk by a slow-embered fire  
And his pet grandchild questions him, why then  
He may begin to hear the guns again,  
His hands may fumble toward the treacherous wire  
That . . .

“Sonny,” he’ll sigh, “at *Château-Thierry*” . . .

KARLE WILSON BAKER



GRAVES IN FRANCE

THEIR fates shall be a song, a schoolboy's wonder,  
For many a day—  
O, the red treasure we have buried yonder,  
So far away!

O, the poor, panting love that must go weeping  
Through bloody foam,  
To find the soldier in his glory sleeping,  
So far from home!

France, we have loved thee! But beyond all measure  
Our love shall be,  
Since in thy bosom we have hid our treasure  
Of agony.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON



SENTRY GO

**T**RUE lad who shared the guard with me  
That night of whirling snow,  
What other nights have brought to you  
I shall not know.

I never even hear your name  
And hardly saw your face,  
Yet you poured out all your heart to me  
As we kept pace.

I know not if you're living still,  
Or fallen in the fight:  
But in my heart your heart is safe  
Till the last night.

ALICE CORBIN



A LITANY IN THE DESERT

I

ON the other side of the Sangre de Cristo mountains there is a great welter of steel and flame. I have read that it is so. I know nothing of it here.

On the other side of the water there is terrible carnage. I have read that it is so. I know nothing of it here.

I do not know why men fight and die. I do not know why men sweat and slave. I know nothing of it here.

II

Out of the peace of your great valleys, America, out of the depth and silence of your deep canyons,

Out of the wide stretch of yellow cornfields, out of the stealthy sweep of your rich prairies,

Out of the high mountain peaks, out of the intense purity of your snows,

Invigorate us, O America.

Out of the deep peace of your breast, out of the sure strength of your loins,

Recreate us, O America.

Not from the smoke and the fever and fret, not from the welter of furnaces, from the fierce melting-pot of cities;

But from the quiet fields, from the little places, from  
the dark lamp-lit nights—from the plains, from the  
cabins, from the little house in the mountains,

Breathe strength upon us :

And give us the young men who will make us great.



W. M. LETTS



A BALLADE FOR PEACE DAY

**T**O-DAY Peace came on radiant feet  
And blew her trumpet in the Square—  
“The War is over”—news is fleet,  
And soon through every thoroughfare  
Passed Youth and Joy, a radiant pair,  
Arms linked and bright heads crowned with bays.  
Yet while there’s laughter everywhere  
Some must go softly all their days.

There are no strangers; kind hearts beat  
In unison; the joy they share  
Makes all akin.—We smile and greet  
Like happy neighbors at a Fair.  
Flags float above us. Here and there  
The church bells chime their solemn praise,  
There seems no room for grief or care.  
Must some go softly all their days?

The young once more may find life sweet,  
They need not dread dull-eyed Despair.  
With fearless hearts shall lovers meet,  
Together climb the rainbow stair  
To some dream castle in the air.

The fire of hope may leap and blaze,  
But for the sorrows past repair  
Some must go softly all their days.

*Envoy*

O broken hearts who needs must bear  
The cost of this new world we raise,  
May God console you, is our prayer,  
While you go softly all your days.

THE ROAD THAT GOES WEST

“And when the world is hushed and the fever of life over and our work done, then in thy mercy give us a safe lodging and a quiet rest.”—Prayer.

**W**HEN from this war my way lies to the west,  
Footsore and muddy, wounded, shattered, spent,  
Death being past I shall but crave a rest,  
A kindly hostel, welcome and content.

Some hope for golden streets and gates of pearl  
And some for haloes and a sea of glass,  
May God forgive me for a thankless churl—  
I'd rather have one field of daisied grass.

I am too battle-stained for mansions fine,  
Too tired for the flutes and minstrelsy.  
A Paradise remote and green be mine,  
An English Heaven were good enough for me.

I'd choose to reach it when the evening sun  
Sends level beams among the elm tree boles,  
When rooks and daws fly home and labor's done,  
And all the wayside flowers wear aureoles.

Later an English twilight sweet with stocks,  
A flittering of bats against the sky,  
Dim orchard grass where dandelion clocks  
Tell fairy time to elves who wander by,

Gnarled boughs beneath the casement of my room,  
That white still room set far from strife and fear;  
The church owl hooting in his hallowed gloom,  
A sound of hurried waters at the weir;

The house all hushed save when the night winds stir  
The cluster roses nodding at the pane,  
Or drowsy moths set soft gray wings a-whirr  
About the walls, then sink to rest again.

How good to lie and dream with fast-shut eyes,  
Of every care and baulked desire bereft;  
To take no heed of punishment or prize  
Or that bewildered toil-worn life I'd left.

Who knows, the Master of the house might stand  
At rising of the moon beside my bed  
And say, "Sleep on, sleep on," and lay His hand,  
In benediction on my weary head.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS



EPITAPH FOR US

ONE with the turf, one with the tree  
As we are now, you soon shall be,  
As you are now, so once were we.

The hundred years we looked upon  
Were Goethe and Napoleon.  
Now twice a hundred years are gone,

And you gaze back and contemplate,  
Lloyd George and Wilson, William's hate,  
And Nicholas of the bloody fate;

Us, too, who won the German war,  
Who knew less what the strife was for  
Than you, now that the conqueror

Lies with the conquered. You will say:  
"Here sleep the brave, the grave, the gay,  
The wise, the blind, who lost the way."

But for us English, for us French,  
Americans who held the trench,  
You will not grieve, though the rains drench

The hills and valleys, being these.  
Who pities stocks, or pities trees?  
Or stones, or meadows, rivers, seas?

We are with nature, we have grown  
At one with water, earth, and stone—  
Man only is separate and alone,

Earth sundered, left to dream and feel  
Illusion still in pain made real,  
The hope a mist, but fire the wheel.

But what was love, and what was lust,  
Memory, passion, pain or trust,  
Returned to clay and blown in dust,

Is nature without memory—  
Yet as you are, so once were we,  
As we are now, you soon shall be,

Blind fellows of the indifferent stars  
Healed of your bruises, of your scars  
In love and living, in the wars.

Come to us where the secret lies  
Under the riddle of the skies,  
Surrender fingers, speech, and eyes.

Sink into nature and become  
The mystery that strikes you dumb,  
Be clay and end your martyrdom.

Rise up as thought, the secret know.  
As passionless as stars bestow  
Your glances on the world below,

As a man looks at hand or knee.  
What is the turf of you, what the tree?  
Earth is a phantom—let it be.

## JOHN GOULD FLETCHER



### THE SILENT NAVY

GO look you beyond Heligoland,  
German sailors:  
Go look you beyond Heligoland,  
To see what the dawn brings forth.  
“We have passed beyond Heligoland,  
And have strained our gaze far off to west,  
Where the shadow of a silent navy  
Rose between sea and sky.”

Go shell the English coast,  
German sailors:  
Go shell the English coast,  
To show you have no fear.  
“We have shelled the English coast,  
And the blood of the innocent stains our hands,  
But the thought of a silent navy  
Made us scurry away.”

Go sweep the northern waters,  
German sailors:  
Go sweep the northern waters,  
To find what may be there.  
“We have swept the northern waters,

Till we came to Jutland Reef at last,  
When the smoke of a silent navy  
Made us break off the battle."

Go down beneath the waves,  
German sailors:  
Go down beneath the waves,  
Till you come to the open sea.  
"We have been beneath the waves,  
And have carried slaughter to the seas;  
But the shadow of a silent navy  
Guarded our enemy."

Put forth to sea at last,  
German sailors:  
Put forth to sea at last,  
The day, the day has come!  
"We have put to sea at last,  
And, to a signal, dropped our flags  
At the bidding of a silent navy  
Watching our doom of shame."

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